18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

they advance in formation towards the *Jago's* hut, quicker and quicker until in a wild rush they fling themselves as one body before the chief. When all the warriors have saluted the *Jago*, they retire for further rearrangement of their dress and this time they put away their spears. Armed with sticks and small shields only, they form a circle, two abreast round the drum. The girls now appear on the dancing-ground, and in two's or three's wander round the circle of waiting men, choosing their partners by a point of the hand or a discreet nod of the head. The choice of a partner is entirely the prerogative of the girl and the man has no say in the matter. He cannot refuse. It is a point of honour to the initiate that he should be chosen by some girl, for to dance with a girl is part of the ceremony and if ignored he would be the subject of many sarcastic witticisms afterwards. 535 881

Warriors and their partners then arrange themselves in groups of eight or ten, the men two abreast facing the girls who always dance backwards. In the actual dance, these groups advance anti-clockwise, hopping on both legs in time to rhythm. The head is held erect, the men with their arms flexed, holding in one hand a dancing stick, while the girls dance with their hands at their sides. There is no variation of this formation, other than an occasional raising of the hands above the head by the group as a whole.

While the dance is proceeding, the audience is entertained further by various individuals who greatly to their own enjoyment imitate animals or individuals of neighbouring tribes. The Shilluk are born mimers and every conceivable trick is devised. Thus at one *Cong*, the on-lookers were amused to see the arrival of a wild and unruly bull accompanied by two exasperated herdsmen who eventually succeeded in lassoing it, after it had charged and scattered the crowd. In another corner a hyena was craftily dragging away an old mat representing the corpse of a goat. Current events are also acted and although the side-shows have no connection with the *Cong Bul* itself, they are very popular with the guests and those who are clever at miming enjoy great prestige. 535 536 881 [554]

The *Cong Bul* lasts for about two hours. Shortly before sunset the drum ceases to beat in rhythm and the exhausted dancers hastily 535 881